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ABSTRACT

A resource room program was proposed for integrating career education with academic instruction at the elementary level. The curriculum incorporated the following skill areas: survival skills (responsibility, independence, and appropriate behavior); social skills (socially acceptable behavior and interpersonal skills); communication skills (listening and expression); and general knowledge (personal, geographical, and state and world information as well as knowledge of natural surroundings, i.e., names of seasons, days of the week, etc.). The model called for the use of learning centers in lieu of seatwork and provided for students to receive the training necessary to be able to use all the instructional materials, audiovisual equipment, self-check keys, checklists, and schedules that would be used in an independent study setting. Use of the independent study approach also presupposed that students would be taught and expected to work quietly and cooperatively, to share materials, and to get materials out and put them away. Direct teacher-student contact and an instruct-practice-reinforce strategy were also incorporated into the model. As part of the model's strategy, students were given informal tests to evaluate their mastery of a given skill, and periodic review of the skill or concept was provided in order to ensure its maintenance. (MN)

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INTEGRATING CAREER EDUCATION WITH ACADEMICS IN AN ELEMENTARY RESOURCE ROOM

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INTEGRATING CAREER EDUCATION WITH ACADEMICS IN AN ELEMENTARY RESOURCE ROOM

This paper describes a resource room program at the elementary level that integrates career education with academic instruction. The program to be discussed is individualized to meet specific student needs while infusing elementary level career education goals and social skills.

The underlying premise is that career education goals and social skills can be effectively integrated through academics at the elementary level. These goals are viewed as essential preparation for the secondary level and self-sufficiency as adults (see:Table 1.0). This is accomplished in a highly structured environment that stresses goals beyond pure academics to a more broadened curriculum (see: Table 2.0). This curriculum incorporates the following goals:

1. Survival Skills
   - A. Responsibility
     1. Bringing pencil and paper to class
     2. Completing homework correctly by due date
     3. Independently following schedules for learning centers, completing tasks correctly and self-checking/monitoring own progress
     4. Having an appropriate appearance
   - B. Independence
     1. Following a schedule for learning centers
     2. Completing work on time
     3. Self-checking and recording tasks completed
     4. Reading and following directions
     5. Asking for help only when needed
     6. Trying a task before giving up or asking for assistance
     7. Initiating a new task or activity
   - C. Appropriate Behavior
     1. Following school and class rules
     2. Attending in groups
     3. Staying on task
     4. Listening and following directions
     5. Controlling impulses

Table 1.0

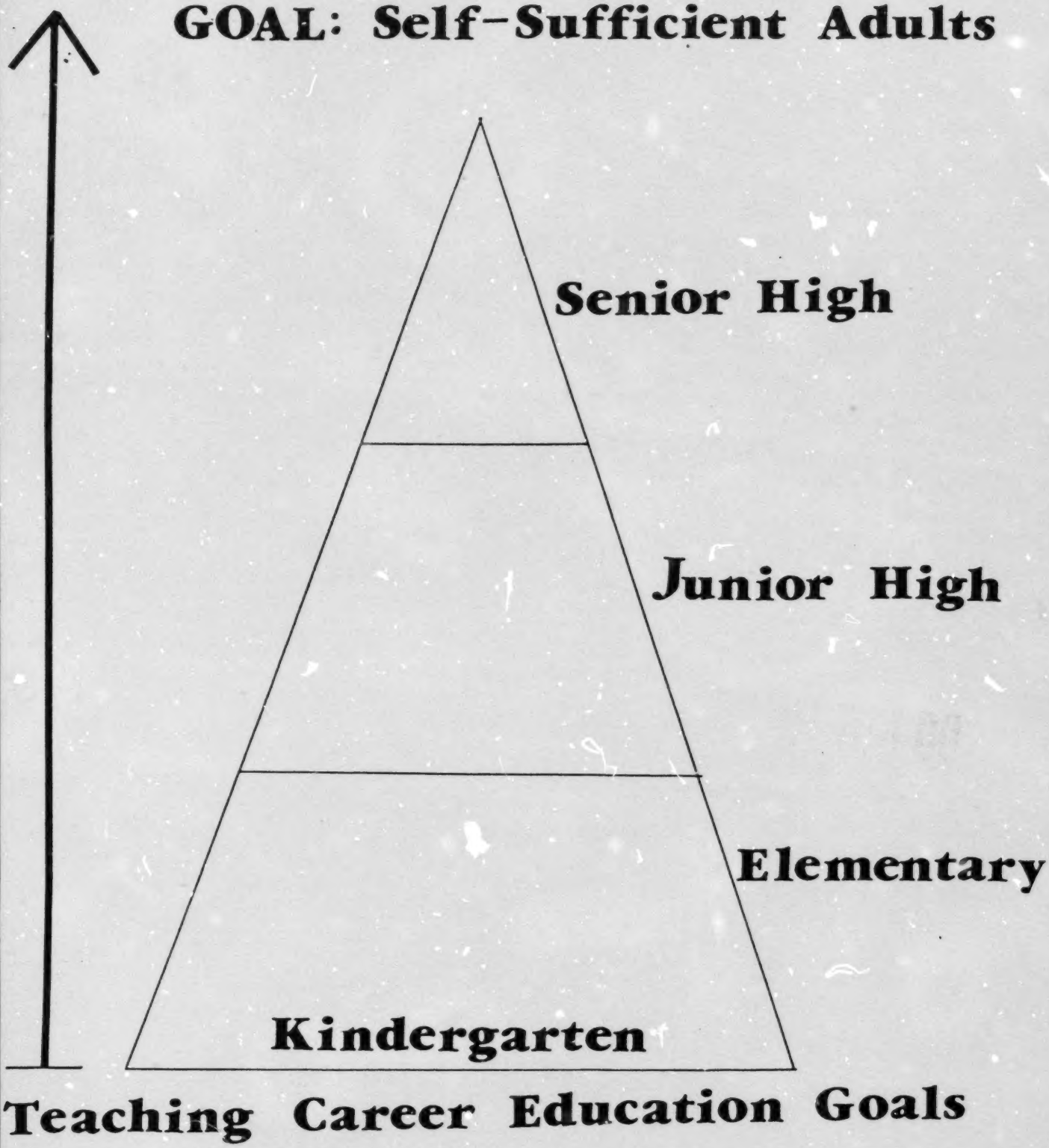
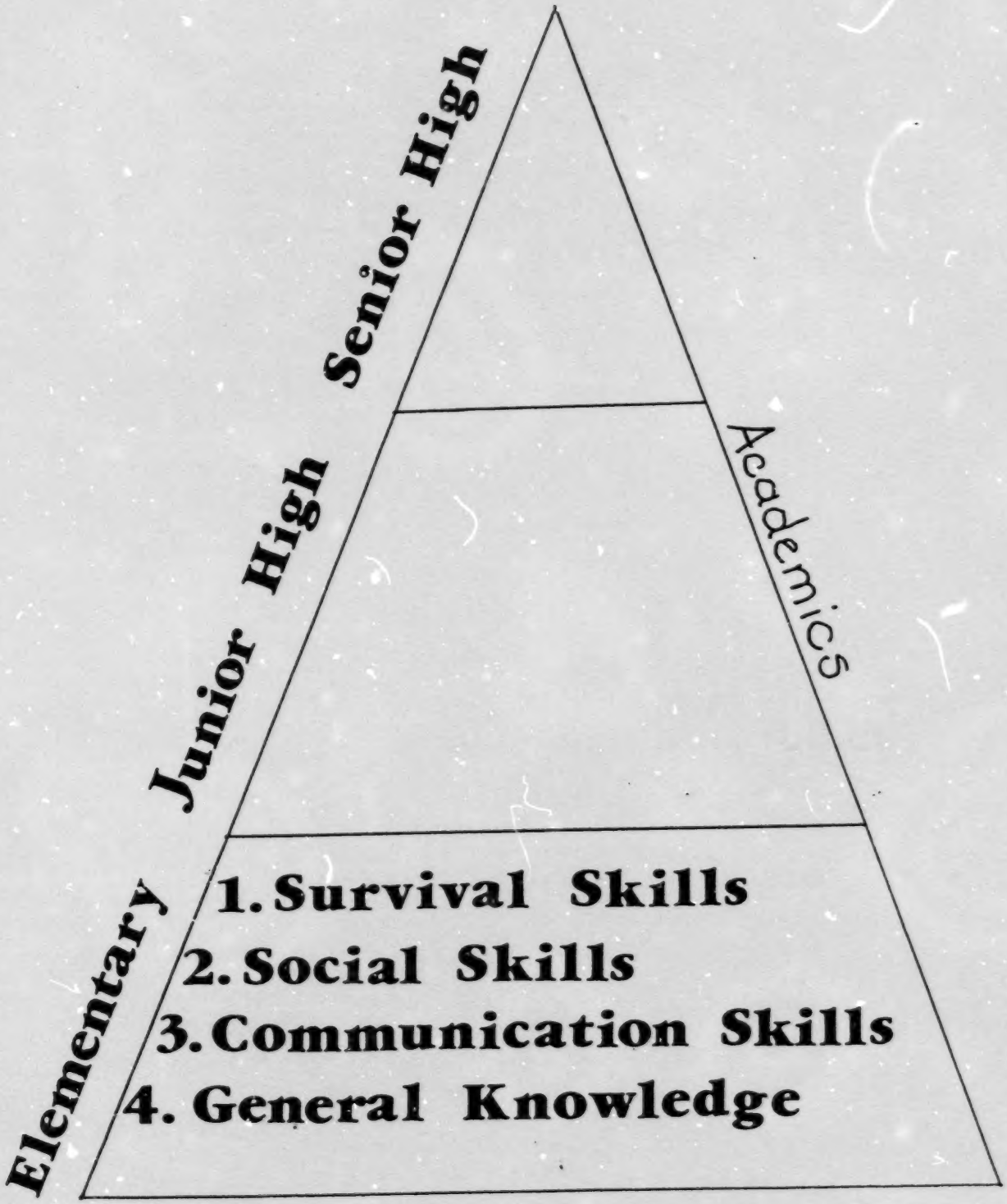

GOAL: Self-Sufficient Adults
Senior High
Junior High
Elementary
Kindergarten
Teaching Career Education Goals

Table 2.0

Self-Sufficient Adults



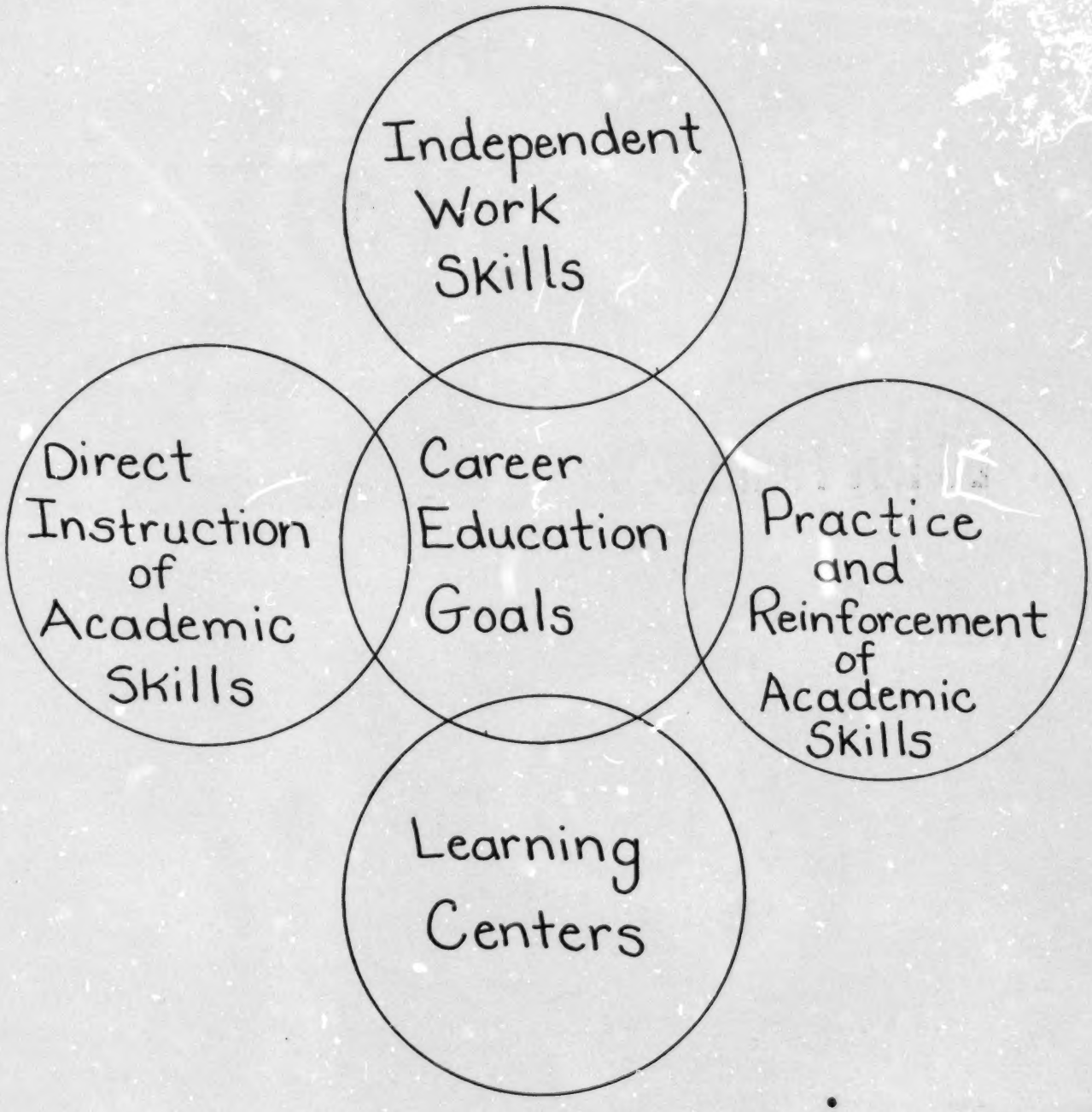
2. Social Skills
   - A. Socially Acceptable Behavior
     1. Social behavior compatible with age, grade level, and ability level; generalization of skills
     2. Learning to deal with frustration
   - B. Interpersonal Skills
     1. Sharing and taking turns
     2. Actively participating in conversation
     3. Volunteering for various tasks

3. Communication Skills
   - A. Listening
     1. Maintaining eye contact with speaker
     2. Asking appropriate questions about topic
     3. Following oral directions
   - B. Expression
     1. Expressing ideas clearly, grammatically, with correct mechanics in written form
     2. Expressing ideas clearly in complete, grammatically correct sentences

4. General Knowledge
   - A. Personal Information
     1. Can state complete name, address, phone number
     2. Can state name of school attended, parents' names, brothers, sisters
   - B. Geographical Information
     1. Can state city or town where s/he lives
     2. Can state county, name of state and country
   - C. State/World Information
     1. Can state local and state current events
     2. Can name the governor and president
   - D. Natural Surroundings
     1. Can name the days of the week, months of the year
     2. Can name the seasons

These elementary career education goals and academic skill development form the core of the program (see: Table 3.0). The first step in implementing the program is the most crucial. Time must be spent at the beginning of the year to teach independent work skills. These skills have been discussed in terms of underlying career education goals and development of these same skills allow the teacher time in the classroom for direct instruction.

Table 3.0


Independent Work Skills
Direct Instruction of Academic Skills
Career Education Goals
Practice and Reinforcement of Academic Skills
Learning Centers

Learning centers were used since they require independent work skills that correspond with career education goals at the elementary level and incorporate academic skills. The learning centers were not used to teach academic skills but rather to practice and reinforce academic skills taught in direct instruction. Students learned to monitor their own progress, follow directions, finish a task, and go to the next task, and initiate a new task without assistance.

Learning centers were used in lieu of seatwork. Rather than students being handed daily assignments, typically ditto worksheets in folders, they were actively involved in a variety of learning tasks at the centers. Answer keys were used for self-checking which allowed students to assume responsibility in monitoring their own progress. When self-checking keys were not used on some written assignments, then students placed the completed work in an IN box and picked it up from an OUT box when it was reviewed by the teacher.

The students were taught to use all instructional materials, audio-visual materials and equipment, self-checking keys, checklists of tasks completed, and schedules. "Early Bird" work (i.e., word search, mazes, coded puzzles, etc. using arithmetic or reading skills), a library center and listening center provided activities for those students who finished learning center tasks early. Time was spent at the beginning of the year teaching the students how to follow their schedules, use the learning centers, and "walking" them through their schedules as many times as needed.

Because of student movement from center to center and the variety of activities taking place at the same time, it was important to set behavioral expectations. Students must learn to work quietly and cooperatively, share materials, get materials and put them away in order and follow class rules. A behavior management program was easily integrated and worked well.

Table 4.0 THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS AND STUDENT EVALUATION

STEP 1: INSTRUCTION-A method of instruction is used to teach the skill or concept. The method includes:

DIALOGUE-Statements of explanation and/or questioning; demonstrating the skill or task can be paired with dialogue.

MATERIALS-Use of manipulatives, visual aids, instructional worksheets, models, or examples.

STEP 2: PRACTICE-Supervised or teacher-directed practice of the skill or task

STEP 3: REINFORCEMENT-The use of motivational games and activities involving the skill and are designed to reinforce the skill or concept.

STEP 4: MASTERY CHECK OR EVALUATION-An informal test to evaluate the student's mastery of the skill or concept that has been presented, practiced, and reinforced.

STEP 5: MAINTENANCE-Periodic review of the skill or concept.

Unpublished manuscript: D. Dransfield and M. Gerken, 1979.

Time spent in teaching independent work skills and the use of learning centers allowed time for direct teacher-student instruction, including 1:1, small group, and large group. Basic academic skills in reading, arithmetic, oral and written language were emphasized. The instructional model used was one of instruct-practice-reinforce (see: Table 4.0).

Homework was also used as a means of promoting responsibility. It was expected of all students in grades 2-6. A reward system was used to encourage completing and returning homework assignments.

Teacher expectations are crucial to the success of the program (see: Table 5.0). Any resource room student regardless of grade or label can be taught to use learning centers and schedule. All students can function successfully within this program and teacher expectations must be high. Academic goals should be at each student's level but functional skills and behavioral/social skills must be developed so that they are comparable to the regular class student. Otherwise, it will be difficult to mainstream the resource room student successfully.

Paper presented at 62nd Annual CEC Convention, Washington, D.C., April 26, 1984 by Diane Clark and Marilyn K. Gerken.

Table 5.0

Teacher Expectations